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ABSTRACT

The American educational system must emphasize values education and the role of the teacher in instilling proper values. Within the context of this paper, values are the intrinsic regard people have for other people, ideas, attitudes, or modes of behavior. Values rest on a philosophical base and require the intellectual choice of the beholder. Education must promote three values: authenticity, literacy, and self-accountability. Authenticity requires a person to be valid to himself and self-actualizing. To achieve this, teaching must be people-oriented and should accentuate individual strengths. Literacy, which is synonymous with learning and cultivation, involves education in the mother tongue, social studies, mathematics, science, and a foreign language. Self-accountability requires a person to be responsible for his own deeds. In general, society's values are perverted because they place esteem on celebrities and political puppets, not on artists, philosophers, researchers, and minority members who contribute to society's well-being. In order to prevent students from following society's misplaced values, teachers must emphasize authenticity in preparing new teachers for their roles. Courses in the foundations and philosophy of education should concentrate on these problems. (Author/AV)

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VALUES: JAUNDICED PERVERSIONS/LUCID ALTERNATIVES

by

Dr. Albert Nissman

First Congress on Education
Harbour Castle Hilton
Toronto, Canada

Monday, June 19, 1978
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SEMINARS
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INTRODUCTION

I take the position that the teacher is the exemplar--the human being worthy of emulation. And, if the teacher is no good, the curriculum, the plant, the books, the budget will not be much good either. The teacher is the instrument, the instrumentality, the developer of values. The teacher is the creator of the educational scenery and scenario, the instructional terrain, the lay of the instructional land upon which we pursue values. I repeat: the teacher is primary; buildings, books, budgets, etc. are all secondary and tertiary. If the teacher is no damn good, the curriculum--the total curriculum, co-curriculum, and extra-curriculur environment--will also be no damn good.

Learning is an existential encounter between each human being and his environment. In this environment, any teacher who chooses to make a difference will make one. But he cannot make it unless he is an exemplar who believes that learning must rest on a foundation of developing values. Further, he knows that The Mediocre Teacher Tells; The Good Teacher Explains; The Superior Demonstrates; and The Great Teacher Inspires. (Wm. Arthur Ward)

If the teacher is to really help youngsters develop values, he must recall an ancient Chinese proverb and implement it in his teaching:

I hear, and I forget;
I see, and I remember;
I do, and I understand.

Values must be lived. They must be practiced. Values are, in reality, a survival kit. An education without values is sanity at half mast. We are

all subject to a narrow stream of data. The learner cannot learn all. He must be selective in his learning, and the teacher must be selective in his teaching. Values are an integral part of education. Education sans values is deathly akin to lungs without oxygen. In the teaching of values, however, distinctions must be made among education, indoctrination, and conditioning. Education is a value-developer, and there are three lucid values that have no peers: authenticity, literacy, and self-accountability. The schools, typically are asked to do too much or too little. However, these three values--authenticity, literacy, and self-accountability are just right; they make for a whole person who knows that his stream of data is narrow, uniquely so. In his quest, the learner pursues authenticity--his genuine self; literacy--the cognitive function in all its facets; and self-accountability--being motivated internally, being inner-directed. In the ideal learning environment, the teacher is more than a mere dispenser of data; he is an exemplar worthy of emulation.

One need not have infectious hepatitis to become jaundiced--at least as far as education, the process and the product, is concerned. And, I, having served the profession of education for 26 1/2 years, have a lover's quarrel with education--what it has been, what is is, and what it might become for the youth it ostensibly serves. And, of course, I would not so paraphrase Robert Frost if I did not care, if I did not give a damn; for this caring and this damning have made all the difference.

But let us not riddle education full of blame. The problems which we face (or do the problems face us?) are not unique to the education of our youth; nor is education the only cause or the only symptom.

> The problem of our youth [education] is not youth. The problem is the spirit of our age: denial of transcendence, the vapidity of values, emptiness in the heart, the decreased sensitivity to the imponderable quality of the spirit, the collapse of communication between the realm of tradition and the inner world of the individual. The central problem is that we do not know how to think, how to pray, how to cry, how to resist the deceptions of too many persuaders. (Heschel.)

This caring, this giving a damn tell me that we need to pay serious attention to Buber's philosophical construct of "I-Thou" over "I-It". That is to say, education that humanizes teachers and students alike will enable ALL people to know each other as unique human entities, not mere things, faceless pawns, inanimate objects. It is only when people view other people as less than people, thereby making themselves less human in the process, that violence, murder, rape, and holocausts of all kinds mar the human terrain.

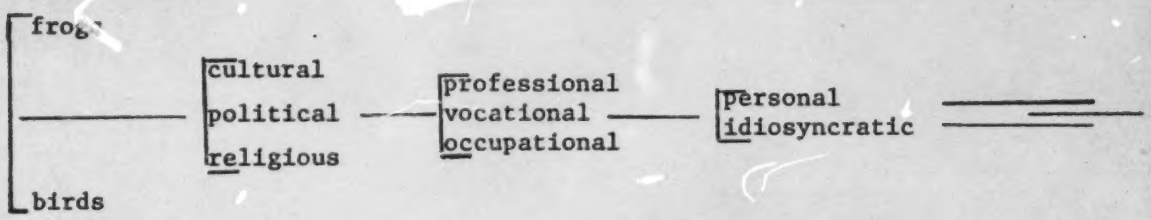
Our educational malaise is largely the result of a paucity of lucid values, and/or a plethora of perverted values. And within the context of this paper, values are the intrinsic regard people place on other people, certain ideas, attitudes, or on modes of behavior. Values rest on a philosophical base and require the intellectual choice of their beholder. But the choice is influenced by his emotional state as well. And values, lucid values, are needed for human survival.

> [There is a need] for teaching human values in the classroom--values such as love, cooperation, trust, acceptance, joy, dignity, respect for individual differences, compromise, truth, understanding, and reverence....Human values must be taught because they are the key to the survival of the species HOMO SAPIENS. Teaching human values is teaching survival skills....
>
> In a society based on human values, man's most precious resource is his fellow man. If the school has a function for the future, it is to teach our young these human values, these survival skills. (Hawley and Hawley).

Yes, education sans values is deathly akin to lungs without oxygen. Yet, there is an immense problem in discerning the shadowy lines between and among education, indoctrination, and conditioning. But we can not be like Hamlet, forever in a maelstrom of indecision; we must come to grips with the understanding that values can be discovered honestly, intellectually, and emotionally; they need not be inculcated via rote sans reason and commitment. Yet, the specter of the questions remains: Which values do we care to impart to nourish, to nurture? And who will make the choices? There are answers; we must seek them, understand them, and implement them!

Narrow Stream of Data

Each human being views his world through a narrow stream of data. Therefore, the total learning environment is different for each human being.



The foregoing are examples of agents of selectivity or filter-screeners. Some are voluntarily controlled; some are involuntary; some are dominant; and some are recessive. But each of these filters makes each of us view the world in a slightly different way.

Values cannot be developed without wrestling with certain philosophical questions.

1. Who are my students?
2. What shall they be taught? How? Why? Where? When?
3. For what purpose?
4. And by whom?

Six Philosophical Questions

1. What is man's origin?
2. What is man's nature?
3. What is man's destiny?

1. What is good?
2. What is true? (real?)
3. What is beautiful?

In fact, no real curriculum can be developed unless we concern ourselves with these questions and discuss the term education.

EDUCATION

Regardless of how we view education--as process and product--ultimately real learning becomes an existential confrontation. Given similar syllabi, similar instructional material, and similar teachers, each human being learns at his own rate of speed, at his own depth, and for his own purposes.

> So it is that compulsory education is absolutely impossible. No one, no law, no court can compel a single human being to become educated. At best, we can motivate, inspire, and even cajole, but we can not compel learning. Compulsion is external; education is internal. We can force a body to be present; we can not mandate learning. The only thing compulsory is attendance, the physical presence for schooling. Thus, compulsory education is an untenable contradiction of terms. (Nissman.)

This author's words written in another context are appropriate as we focus on values and develop value-seeking human beings. FORCED VALUES FROM WITHOUT is also an untenable contradiction of terms. A human being's real values must flow from within just as his very life's blood does.

Yet, there is a path clearly illumined. Education--the womb-to-tomb process--be it through formal agencies such as the school and the family, or informal agencies such as magazines and newspapers and all shades and nuances

in between--must impart, nourish, and nurture three values, an almost perfect menage a trois, three significant values. And these are values that have no peers:

1) the value of being and still becoming authentic
2) the value of being and still becoming literate
3) the value of being and still becoming self-accountable

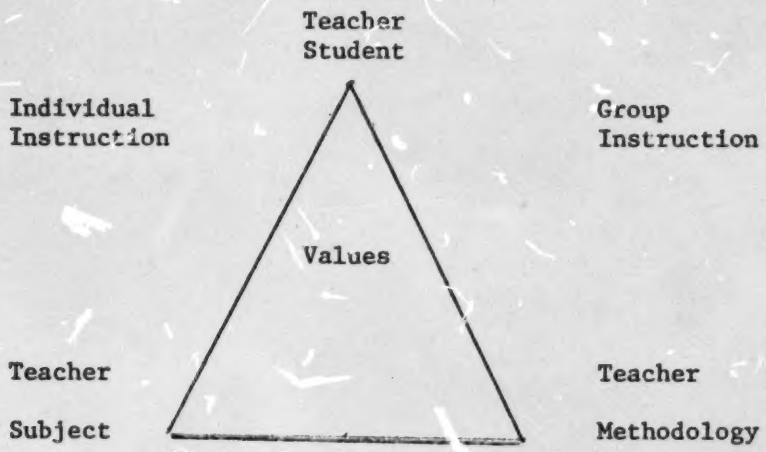
Education as a value-developer may be viewed as the generating theme of schooling. And the symbolic expressions spawned by this theme are authenticity, literacy ("letteracy"), and self-accountability:

> Education does not deal with inert raw materials, but with living minds that are, perhaps, instinctively concerned first with preserving their own integrity and second with reaching a meaningful accommodation with the world around them. The output of the educational process is never a finished product; it is an individual who is sufficiently aware of his own existence in a world that neither he nor anyone else can fully understand or predict. (Joseph V. Summers)

The Arrangement of the Environment

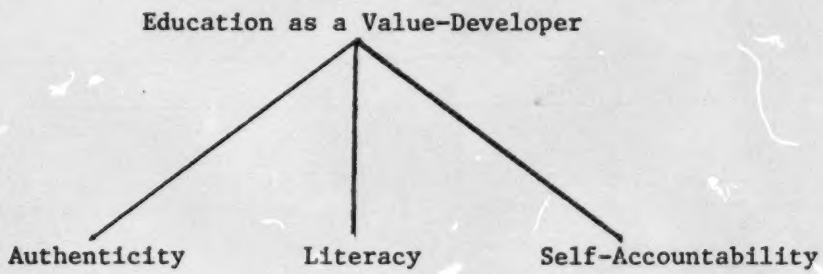
Your answers to the foregoing philosophical questions will determine what you do with students, subject matter, values, and methodology. Your

answers will determine how you arrange the learning environment for the teaching of values.



Values and Environment

As I view education as a value-developer, there are three values that education must be concerned with:



Values: Definitions

Values are the intrinsic regard which people place on certain ideas, attitudes, or modes of behavior. Values rest on a philosophical base and re-

quire the intellectual/emotional choice of their beholder.

Some middle class values--those that you and I give lip service to or may actually treasure--remind me of the Boy Scout Oath: On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty, to God and country, and to obey the Scout Law, to keep myself mentally awake, morally straight, and physically strong.

Additional values abound in the Scout Law: a scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

In short, values imply worth, advantage, worthiness, dignity, and caliber; valuelessness implies thrashiness, uselessness, waste, worthlessness. When we value something, we appreciate it, we hold it in high esteem, we prize it, we treasure it. A value is costly, precious, sterling, priceless, invaluable.

Now for the moment you have been waiting for: the 3 values in detail!

The Three Lucid Values

Authenticity

When we are authentic, we are simon-pure, veritable, valid to ourselves, a bona fide human being. We are real genuine, believable, creditable and and credible to ourselves first and later to others. "People who do not accept themselves, or who assume false identities, do not easily form satisfactory relations with others."--(Anthony Starr) Authenticity gives the human being strength. "Integrity of the self is the main source of strength in the individual. To be untrue to oneself, dishonest, or insincere may re-

sult in self-impairment." (Clark E. Moustoukas) The authentic human being has the opportunity "to design himself, to work toward that end, this is man's supreme privilege--to work out his own salvation."--(Maris I. Rasey.)

True, education needs to dispense facts. But it needs to do more. It needs to help each individual explore, probe, be human, be genuine, seek his own relevance, question his own beliefs, and his own actions. To do otherwise reduces education to a routinized process analogous to cutting standardized cookies. Can the humanistic perspective of children be developed if all children are processed through the same cookie molds?

Herschel discusses authenticity with superb clarity:

> It is not enough for me to say "I am"; I want to know WHO I AM, and in relation to whom I live. It is not enough for me to ask questions; I want to know how to answer the one question that seems to encompass everything I face: What am I here for?...
>
> Who am I? A mere chip from the block of being? Am I not both the chisel and the marble? Being and foreseeing? Being and bringing into being?...
>
> The crisis of the family is a crisis of the home. Home [and school, too] is where we love, where we dream, and where we live authenticity, where the core is revealed. Home [and school, too] is where

> we learn what values to cherish, what goals to be committed to, as well as the meaning of being committed. (Heschel.)

Real education must be an antidote against regimentation and dehumanization in the schools; such an antidote would be a lively prescription for humanism through which we develop authenticity. This has several implications: the dosage here, as with all medicine, will have to be regulated; teaching is people-oriented; to help us become authentic, our education should accentuate our strengths and minimize and eliminate our weaknesses; to paraphrase Finley Dunne, education must comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable. Authentic people can not be complacent and smug. In short, to be and to become wholly authentic and human, we need to become self-actualized: the socially-self-actualizing person is energetic, creative, self-motivating, spontaneous, efficient, and tolerant. He lives life fully, answering to his own inner nature and finding in that nature a call to play a useful part in that society. He is acting on a foundation of human values. (Hawley and Hawley.)

Literacy

Literacy is synonymous with education, learning, background, and cultivation. To be literate is to be lettered, well-educated in the generative subjects--the mother tongue, social studies, mathematics, science, and a foreign language. To be literate is to be schooled in the vast world of words, numbers, facts, and ideas.

Our ability to read and write, and by extension to think and feel, and sense, and to compute should not blind us to or restrict us from what Heschel describes as a sense of the ineffable, of the majesty, grandeur, and awe that suffuse this divinely created universe.

> We teach children how to measure, how to weigh. We fail to teach them how to revere, how to sense wonder and awe. The sense of the sublime, the sign of the inward greatness of the human soul and something which is potentially given to all men, is now a rare gift....
>
> We tell the pupil many things, but what has our instruction to do with his inner problems, with the way he is going to behave or think outside the classroom? In our classroom we shy away from fundamental issues. How should one deal with evil? What shall one do about envy? What is the meaning of honesty? How should one face the problem of loneliness? What has religion to say about war and violence? About indifference and evil? (Heschel)

The teacher has a definite role in developing, nourishing, and nurturing lucid values via value exploration and clarification, in short, literacy, the cognitive function.

> What do we value? What life choices can we make which will reflect our values? Do we have the information we need on which to form value judgements? What additional information is needed? (Hawley and Hawley)

But there are some who define literacy too narrowly:

> The purpose of education is not happiness; it is not social integration or political system. Its purpose is at once the discipline of the mind for its own sake: these ends are to be achieved through the mastery of fundamental subjects which cluster around language and number, the two chief instruments by which man knows himself and understands his relation to the world. (Allen Tate)

However, some of our greatest minds have equated literacy with a sense of values:

> It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise he--with his specialized knowledge--more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person. (Albert Einstein)

> Every citizen of this country, whether he pounds nails, raises corn, designs rockets or writes poetry, should be taught to know and love his American heritage; to use the language well; to understand the physical universe, and to enjoy the arts. The dollars he gains in absence of enlightment like this will be earned in drudgery and spent in ignorance. (Calvin Edward Gross)

> The heart of the problem of a general education is the continuance of the liberal and humane tradition. Neither the mere acquisition of information nor the development of special skills and talents can give the broad basis of understanding which is essential if our condition is to be preserved. (James Bryant Conant)

Self-Accountability

To be self-accountable is to make the decision that as a human being, I am liable, responsible for my deeds. I am chargeable and answerable to myself--first. When I act, I owe a debt. I create a liability which must be referred to me--first. I am the one to whom every act of mine must be attributable. A self is the psyche, my very being, and the buck must stop here--at my psyche!

Accountability to self is paramount. It matters not one jot if one is accountable to God out of fear, or respect, or even love, or to outer-directed

others of less than divine origin, if one is not accountable to self, the inner-directed core, the foundation of our authenticity. To be otherwise is to be enslaved by the Adolph Eichmann mentality which pleads, "I was only following orders. I did not know what was happening."

> Man's understanding of WHAT is right and wrong has often varied throughout the ages; yet the consciousness THAT there is a distinction between right and wrong is permanent and universal. (Heschel)

We have to clearly understand that each of us is personally/professionally accountable for what we do. We can not claim to be moral and then hide like Eichmann by, in effect, implying that we were only taking orders; we could not make changes; we were simply pawns. To be educated means to be highly accountable to self first, then to institutions, process, to all we touch, to all that reaches us.

Values in General

Our sense of values--perverted and jaundiced--places high esteem and great monetary rewards on singers who can't sing, actors who can't act, and celebrities with little worth celebrating. Further, there is a peculiar reverence rendered to athletes, so many of whom are less than sportsmanlike.

Conversely, and perversely, this sense of values ignores the Jonas Salks, the poets, the artists, the educators and places them in low esteem or as-

signs them to the ignominy of benign (and sometimes malicious) neglect. This twisted sense of values directs the United Nations to sponsor and accept the absurd resolution which equates Zionism, the oldest human liberation movement, with racism. This same sense of values permits textbook writers to totally ignore or reluctantly provide two bland sentences about the Holocaust, or about the contribution of ALL minorities to the American heritage, or about man's exploitation of his fellow riders in this universe. This same set of values allows the richest nation in the world to do virtually nothing about the cancerous unemployment and all its attendant economic and psychological woes of an estimated 50,000,000 people; while at the same incongruous time, blatant but hollow noises were made about a Bicentennial (recently past) whose loftiest ideals were being crushed by gross insensitivity. This same source of values allows us as a people to place moral eunuchs into positions of the highest leadership potential and responsibility. And these perverted, jaundiced values have come into being, it seems to me, because of stunted authenticity, narrow literacy, and aborted self-accountability.

> My major concern is the human situation. I maintain that the agony of contemporary man is the agony of the spiritually stunted man.
> ...the highest peak of spiritual living is not necessarily reached in rare moments of ecstasy; the highest peak lies wherever we are and may be ascended in a common deed.... An act of injustice is condemned, not because the law is broken, but because a person has been hurt. (Heschel)

True, we give lip-service to those values we are willing to DIE for. Perhaps, this is the poltroon's ultimate cop-out supreme. It is time for the educated person to be known and recognized for the values he is willing to LIVE for.

Teachers as Exemplars and Philosophers

Teachers who deign to be educational leaders and eschew philosophical queries delude themselves.

> Philosophy may be defined as the art of asking the right questions.... Awareness of the problems outlives all solutions. The answers are questions in disguise, every answer giving rise to new questions. (Heschel)

Their very being is suspect. At best, such teachers can be technically competent educational plumbers; at worst, they can be educational automatons who teach without a sense of direction, without belief, farvor, enthusiasm, and without their own carefully developed and nurtured system of values that strives to make man a little lower than the angels, as the psalmist phrases it.

Central to this whole discussion of the teachers as exemplars and philosophers and the concern with values is teacher-education. Teacher-educators need to help prospective and in-service teachers see themselves as they are

developing and becoming authentic. This implies the need for Foundations of Education courses in general, and Philosophy of Education courses in particular through which we probe our innards, valuing, eternally searching, feeling, being real, true to ourselves. With such awarenesses, teachers will then become more able to nurture the values of the children entrusted to them. We must realize that the value of teachers as authentic, genuine people, as true exemplars stands in stark contrast to such offerings as mere gimmicks, gadgetry, systems, and packaging. Authentic teachers, are democratic, passionate, compassionate, and intelligent. They are the exemplars we need.

Conclusions Tentatively Drawn

Education, at its optimum, provides an opportunity for self-identification and self-actualization via the quest for values. There exists much positive evidence re the pragmatic approach: learn by doing; learn to be human by being human; learn to be democratic by participating in democracy. There also exists much that is positive re existentialism with its deeply rooted and its unequivocal belief in the uniqueness and the sancity of the individual, in the freedom of responsibility, and in the concomitant agony of choice.

H. G. Wells' dictum looms large for me. "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." For me personally as a father, husband, teacher, and human being in general, I must consider myself less than a total success and more than a bit of a failure. And, I will feel this way until I and my colleagues can somehow translate the ideals of Micah

and Isaiah into curriculum laden with values which will result in truly the grandeur of which we are capable:

> It has been told thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee: only to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God. (Micah, 6:8).

> They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah, 2:4).

There needs to be a balance between the realm of the spiritual, the world of values and ideas, and the realm of the material with its focus on the world of work and career training. We know that competencies without values are bankrupt.

> Knowledge without zeal is useless. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous. Knowledge and zeal together spell hope. (Hubert H. Humphrey)

Again, we turn to Heschel for a precise statement of the cause of the imbalance:

> We prepare the pupil for employment, for holding a job. We do not teach him how to be a person, how to resist

> conformity, how to grow inwardly, how to say no to his own self. We teach him now to adjust to the public; we do not teach him to cultivate privacy. (Heschel)

Education is a leisurely process--we need to nurture our sensibilities and retreat from bureaucratized education that makes each teacher and student a pre-cut, standardized, homogenized, spiritually sanforized instant cookie punched out by the master cookie mold. Ken Kesey, in <u>One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest</u>, poignantly reminds us that rigid scheduling is anathema to the interests of the individual and his growth. Witness Nurse Ratchett's senseless refusal to alter the working schedule of the inmates; the inviolability of the schedule is more important than allowing the inmates to watch the World Series. The inmates' request was rational; her refusal was insane. In other words, it is my position that if a given is instructionally desirable, it can be made administratively feasible.

In the final analysis, all learning is an existential confrontation between each unique being and his many-splendored universe. The words of Gibran must be hearkened to:

> No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge. The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his

> wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man....
>
> Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. (Gibran)

Thus, we need to nurture our receptivity to each other, and to music, art, poetry, to grace our lives, to make our lives more bearable, and to make you and me less perverse and less jaundiced, and perhaps, to make you and me more nearly human. Thank you.

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